

*Date.*

*Christian Liberty*

ASSERTED:

*698.29*  
*4*

IN OPPOSITION TO

Protestant *POPERY.*

IN A

LETTER

TO

*Mr. THOMAS BRADBURY.*

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*By a Dissenting Lay-Man.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane,*  
A. DODD without *Temple-Bar,* and J.  
HARRISON at the *Royal Exchange,* 1719.  
( Price Four-pence.)

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In Question

Protestant Popery

IN A

LETTER

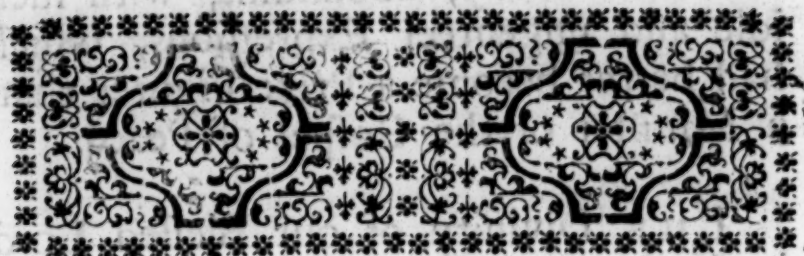
TO

MR. THOMAS BRADUR

By a Dissenting Layman

LONDON

Printed by J. Roberts, in the Strand,  
A. Dodd, without Temple-Bar, and J.  
Harrison at the Royal Exchange, 1733.  
(Price Four-pence)



T O

*Mr. Thomas Bradbury.*

S I R,



THE particular Regard  
I have always enter-  
tain'd for you, and  
your late Letter to  
Mr. *Barrington*, are  
the chief Motives of  
this free and public  
Address. I confess I was not a little  
alarm'd to see a Letter address'd to so  
worthy



worthy a Gentleman, and subscrib'd  
*Thomas Bradbury*, abounding with such  
 idle and ungentle Expressions, which  
 had better become a Prize-Fighter than  
 a Minister of the Gospel of Peace.

THE Divinity of our Blessed Lord  
 is surely not founded on so sandy a  
 Bottom as to stand in need of such  
 a noisy and impertinent a Defence as  
 your late *Answer to the Reproaches*, &c.  
 There is so little remarkable in it,  
 that I profess I should neither have  
 given the World, you Sir, nor my self,  
 the present Trouble, but that I conceiv'd  
 it deserv'd as much Notice as  
 it has occasion'd Admiration; and  
 really when I found by the Drift of  
 it, that the Liberty of every single  
 Christian was to be sacrific'd to the  
 arbitrary Determination of every despotick  
 Priest, I resolv'd to appear  
 in publick in the present plain and  
 christian Dress with an honest and dis-  
 interested View.

I AM not about to deny the Divi-  
 nity of the World's Redeemer; but to  
 vindicate the Liberty of Christians,  
 not to quarrel with or affront the  
 Person of Mr. *Bradbury*, but to point  
 out



out his Irregularities, which I hope he will as readily allow himself to be guilty of, as he peremptorily aims at a Spiritual Dominion, without the disagreeable Incumbrance of Lawn Sleeves.

IT is very natural for Men, who are puff'd up with the vain Applause of the Generality, to be so fond of their own private Opinions, that they presently metamorphose them into absolute Decisions. I am satisfy'd he must be considerably more than a common Rate Christian that is not unhappily carried away with the Torrent of publick Praise. There are very few to be found in our Day who, despising popular Regard, exclaim with St. Paul, *Sirs! Why do ye these things? We are also Men of like Passions with you.* There is not a Man living but is in some Degree troubled with what we call a blind Side; and the least Attempt towards Commendation will, especially with those who have long been reputed the Oracles of the Age we live in, occasion a Titulation which is very pleasing and agreeable; and will lead them to say and do, nay, to preach and print, with a peculiar Air and an unjustifiable Authority, those Things which,

which, when carefully examin'd, will by no Means bear the Test.

I, SIR, who am a Person without Doors, shall not concern my self more immediately with the Proceedings at *Salters-Hall*, nor with the unhappy Divisions of *Arians* and *Athanasians*, but confine my self to your Letter; where, give me Leave to tell you, you are as sparingly Sincere as you are abundantly Witty.

I profess I cannot see any Impropriety of Speech in saying that we are not to allow human Composition, but, according to the true PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE, declare our selves built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets: Nor any Inconsistency in allowing the keeping to Scripture Words to be a Protestant Principle. I am sure this is not half so odd a Way of talking as your mentioning the Aukwardness of calling *Noah* an Independent, or saying that *Moses proceeded on Revolution Principles*, or that *David was the First of a Protestant Succession*. These are Expressions so full of unallowable Levity, and so much beneath a Gospel Minister, in an Affair of such Consequence

quence as that in Debate, that any Man under that Denomination but Mr. *Bradbury* would blush at the hearing them repeated, much more to make use of them. 'Tis too common with you indeed to make use of Expressions, even in the most serious Matters, that would better become the Stage than the Pulpit.

I believe, Sir, I need not tell you that the Laity are too easily to be conducted by their Teachers; and that therefore 'tis necessary, lest ill-minded Persons should cause them to deviate from the Form of sound Words, that they be frequently admonish'd to continue in that honest Principle of consulting the Word of God, which will easily discover to them the Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing, and enable them to distinguish between faithful Watchmen and dumb Dogs who cannot bark: And this necessary and Christian Liberty has, as far as well could be, receiv'd a Wound at *Salters-Hall*, which, if not presently searh'd, will fester to a Degree, if not wholly, almost incurable. As the Laity are too ready to submit, not only to the Judgment of their Ministers, but to believe their



Determinations and Decisions infallible, I would only desire you, on such a Supposition, to consult the Consequences of your late Subscription. *Christian Liberty* is, it seems, now become no more than a Term with a Sett of Men, who must be *Arians*, tho' they disclaim the Doctrines of *Arius*; because Mr. *Bradbury*, and the Gentlemen who Sign'd, will have it so. I take the Liberty to tell you, Sir, that Freedom in Religion, is as much warranted by the Word of God, as Liberty and Property is in *England* countenanc'd by the fundamental Laws of the Kingdom. What Authority hath any Man on Earth, to oblige me to the Belief or Denial of any one Point whatsoever? if there be one who is dubious of my Principles, and endeavours to engage me to the Belief of the Divinity of the Son of God to day, may there not, by the same Rule, be another to morrow, who will aim at perswading me to the contrary, and perhaps enforce it too from Scripture Arguments? The Word of God is, only ought, and ever shall be the only Rule of my Faith: I will not call this a Protestant Principle, lest I offend you, but sure I am, it is an honest one.

W E

WE are commanded to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not again to be entangled in the Yoke of Bondage, and shall we give up our Liberty, purchas'd at no less a Rate, than at the Expence of our Redeemer's Blood, to gratify those, who, if you will not say with them, will stigmatize you as *Arians, Hereticks, &c.* No surely! we shall not stand or fall by the Decree of Men, nor by the Synodical Decisions of *Salters-Hall*. I have the plain written reveal'd Word of God before me, every thing contained therein necessary to Salvation, may be apprehended by the meanest Capacity: Now if any Man will tell me, that five and five make Seven, and that it is plainly imply'd in the literal or mystical Sense of such and such Words of Scripture, I shall beg leave to tell him, he aims at no less, than depriving me of the Christian Liberry of judging according to my Reason, and at a total Subversion of all common Sense. No Man ever had, or ought to have an Authority over the Senses of other Men, any more than over their Consciences: Who ever vested any living Man with

an Authority to Dictate to his Brother in Matters of Religion? It Argues the highest pitch of Spiritual Tyranny in the Person that does so, as well as the most abject spiritual Slavery in him, that receives or acquiesces in the Decisions of other Men. Why did God give me a reasonable Soul? Why did he endow me with an Understanding? Why with a Faculty of Thinking, Contemplating or Reflecting? if I am to be only the Clay on which other Men are to make their Impressions. The supposing these things are such nauseous Offences to common Sense, that I will dismiss this Head with this Protestation, That I desire never to believe in that Being which other Men shall carve out to me, but in such a one only as has reveal'd himself to me as God in his holy Word, by his distinguishing Attributes, and by the miraculous Instances of his Providence.

You have, Sir, all along no doubt behaved your self as that Whig you would be thought to be in your Letter to Mr. *Barrington*, and if you are against any Innovations in your civil Concerns, and against all Impositions in point of Politicks, how came you  
now



now of a sudden to be so very fond of a Spiritual Imposition, and so ready to seize on the Christian Liberties and Properties of other Men?

MINISTERS ought certainly above all others to take particular Care of Imposition; and really to propose the Signing a Paper, in an Assembly of Christian Divines, to prove their owning the Deity of Christ, was not only an Imposition, but the greatest Folly such a Body of Men could possibly be guilty of. All that is alleg'd for your Signing, as I find, is, that the two Houses of Parliament called in Question the Dissenting Ministers Adherence to the Trinity, and that several Ministers in the West had said that those in *London* were of their Opinion, which was supposed to be *Arian*. Now I would ask any Person who is impartial and free from Prejudice, Whether the Glory of the great Redeemer was so much the Concern of those that signed, as a Vindication of themselves to both Houses of Parliament. This is the most detestable Imposition imaginable indeed, and this is bringing Ministers and Churches under a Spiritual Slavery with  
a

a witness, to obtain the good Graces of the Legislature.

I beg your Patience while I take Notice of your Treatment of Mr. *Barrington*. He is, I must tell you, too well known to stand in Need of so inconsiderable an Interest as Mr. *Bradbury's*, in any Corporation, to be honoured with a Seat in Parliament; all who are acquainted with his Merit, and his large Fortune, will be apt to believe Mr. *Bradbury* can romance on proper Occasions, where either a Turn is to be serv'd, or himself aggrandized; especially when a Person of Credit is ready to affirm, that you told him you never made Mr. *Barrington* one Vote: Some People are of Opinion, that you would not have publish'd so much seven Years ago; but the *Case is alter'd*, and you may continue your Boasts; they will meet with no Reception with those who are acquainted with you, and have the Honour to be known to that Gentleman. Mr. *Barrington* is requested, not by a *Pensioner*, it seems, but a *Friend*, never more to concern himself with Papers of Advices, intimating him to be the Person who was  
 Author

Author of this, and not only so, but last Year too; for with an Air truly grand you tell him, That, last Year, and this, now, is a Conviction to you that he who drew them up, may have a Talent for other Things; but you are sure he is poorly furnished for the Government of the Churches; and then saucily add, ‘and don’t suppose, that we who have contended ‘so much against the Descent of the ‘Apostolical Authority upon Bishops, ‘will acknowledge any Pretensions to ‘it in Gentlemen: No, ’tis no more ‘in Long Wigs, than in Lawn Sleeves.’ Is this fit Treatment from a Gospel-Minister to a Gentleman of known Probity, who always as sincerely promoted the Interest of the Dissenters, as he has unquestionably advanced the Service of his Country? I will not launch out into Encomiums on that Gentleman, who stands in need of no Commendations from my Pen, which I avoid lest I offend his Modesty, and incur the Title of a stupid Atheist, and your Displeasure, for speaking well of your Friend. You have indeed shewn us, that you are as fashionable as some others of your Countrymen, who can part with  
your



your Friend at as easy a Rate as they do their Principles, when some End is to be obtained.

THERE are some Persons in the World, who are of Opinion that Mr. *Barrington* has not merited this Usage from you, and, I believe, all will readily agree, that it was not expected. The worst Enemy you have could hardly have entertained a Thought so abject of you, as to believe you could so easily lay aside the Gentleman to gratify your own private Humour. If that worthy Gentleman was the Author of the last Paper of Advices, which however is only a Supposition on my Part, I will venture to affirm, he had no other View in it than the Interest of the Church of Christ, and a Pacification of those Uneasinesses in the West, which to be plain with you, 'tis to be fear'd, were fomented very much by the Letters and private Advices of some Persons in *London*, who would have done better to have taken heed to those Flocks over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers, than to be busying themselves with distant Troubles, which they might with more Success have lamented than pretended

tended to heal. But the *Pruritus Imperandi* has so effectually seiz'd some Persons, that they can as well not be, as cease to be medliny. And, good God! to what a Pitch would this Lording it over thy Heritage arrive, were not some Folks wiser than others.

THAT Excellent Prelate the Lord Bishop of *Bangor* has generously laid open to the View of every one the true Nature of Priestcraft, and judiciously pointed out all the Avenues to it; so that he must be considerably more than a Fool that cannot see what some Men are aiming at. For my part I would chuse rather to fall the Sacrifice of a tyrannical Prince than an ambitious Priest; for there is some Shew of Authority in the former, and not the least Mercy to be expected from the latter. If Episcopacy should prevail beyond the *Tweed* we see what we are to expect; Imposition upon Imposition, Decision on Decision, and peremptory Determinations without the least Shadow of Reason. I find a tolerable Fortune and the Title of *Doctor in Divinity* will have as great an Efficacy on the Passions of some Men

C

who

who call themselves Ministers, as a large Estate and a Mitre will have upon others. Let us not be so very much scar'd at Long Wigs, but as cautiously avoid acknowledging Apostolical Authority in Black Cloaks: Since it is not the Dress, but the Grace of God, which effects an entire Alteration in Men: And they may be as fond of Dominion and Power, for ought I know, who are *Mr.* and *Master of Arts*; as those who are *Doctors* and *My Lords*.

I cannot conclude without taking Notice, Sir, of your odd Treatment of *Dr. Gale*, who has as little merited it as any Man living. The Doctor's Character is, if I mistake not, to preach up Saving Knowledge in Christ from the Word of God, and to expose the Weakness of Tradition in comparison with the Certainty of the reveal'd Will of the Almighty: He is for allowing that christian Liberty of Judging; which will unquestionably, in Process of Time, remove all such fluctuating Notions as we have receiv'd only by the Traditions of other Men, and assented to, because approv'd by the authorative Decisions  
of



of such and such Great Persons : And this is the surest Way of arriving to a Certainty. How often the Doctor has been Author and Patron of certain Performances I know not; But I am fully satisfied it is the Endeavour of that Good Man to fulfil the Ministry he hath receiv'd; and to remove, as far as in his Power is, the Prejudices of Education or Example, which often have a very dangerous and destructive Effect on the Minds of Men in Matters of Religion. It is to be wish'd there were, and heartily to be lamented there are no more of his Opinion in Point of Christian Liberty. I need not say *more* for one who is able to say so *much* for himself and the whole World. May he long live an Ornament to the Church of Christ, and may Thousands have reason to bless God that sent him forth into his Vineyard.

HAPPY would it be if we follow'd more the noble Example of the *Bereans*, who daily search'd the Scriptures, since they are certainly the only infallible Rule of Faith and Worship as they are from God, who cannot Lye. Let us lay aside all the Decisions of Men what-

soever, and on what Point soever ; and if we cannot reduce their Opinions to a Consistency with the powerful Word of God, let us lay them aside too: But then let us have a care of interpreting the Word of God with sinister Views, or only as merely agreeable to the riveted Opinions we have entertain'd, but according as they are interpreted by the Spirit of God Himself ; and if we do this, we then may hope our Divisions will be easily heal'd, and the Bone of Contention quickly remov'd. The Great Law-Giver Jesus Christ has promulgated his Laws in such a manner, that it is as much out of the Power of Men to place any advantageous Glosses upon them, as it is Impudence in them to pretend to it ; and it is at best but Newfangling the Gospel to aim at Interpretations, which the Spirit of God has not made use of. We ought to see to it, that we loose not the Life and Power of Godliness, while we are disputing about those Points which have been controverted ever since Christ has had a Church in the World, and I humbly conceive it to be more necessary for the Welfare of our precious and immortal Souls, to address the Author and Prince of Life for the Assistance of his  
special

special Grace and Guidance of his good Spirit to carry us thro' the perverse Age we live in to his ineffable Glory, than to impose on Men a Subscription of his Deity. I do not remember to have read in Scripture, that either our Lord himself, or his Apostles, required of those who came to him or them on their Souls Concerns, to sign their Belief of a Trinity in Unity, or of his Divinity. St. Paul delivers to the Keeper of the Prison solicitous for his Salvation, the Sum of the Gospel at once : *Believe (says he) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House.* He did not say, thou must believe him to be coequal, coessential or coeternal with the Father, but *believe on him ; q. d.* by Faith lay hold of him. And why should our modern Divines, who pretend to tread in the Steps of that great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, require such as adhere to them, or desire to be Members of their Religious Communities, to sign their Belief of certain Articles? Have they greater Authority than *Paul*? is their Commission of larger Extent than his? no surely; much less should they dare to excommunicate from their Assemblies those who cannot think just as they do ; especially since that Institution was never made use of by the Apostles but in matters the most



most criminal that can be imagined. The  
 ¶ Minister, who was guilty of this, is in-  
 deed deservedly reputed a weak Man,  
 and for my part I am apt to think he was  
 willing to prove himself fairly *independent*,  
 even of the Laws and Rules prescrib'd  
 by Christ and his Apostles, since he may  
 as well excommunicate a Person who  
 cannot make as many wry Faces as he  
 does, as one who cannot think as he  
 does.

THE Dissenting Ministers of Lon-  
 don had done well to have considered  
 before their Meeting, what the Conse-  
 quences of it might be, they might ea-  
 sily have judg'd that there would not  
 be wanting a sufficient Number of their  
 own Body, to oppose the arbitrary and  
 unwarrantable Proceedings of those Men  
 of which you, Sir, made your self one:  
 'Tis a very pretty Affair really, to act  
 contrary to the Rules of the Gospel,  
 which recommends Forbearance and  
 Charity, to be absolute and decisive not  
 only in your own Opinion, but to aim  
 at being so with respect to others, and  
 then to cry out, it is the Glory of the  
 Redeemer you are vindicating. Alas!

AND now, Sir, upon the Whole I must tell you, you have very much debased your Character by that Letter: The Words *Sorry Buffoon, Stupid Atheist, &c.* are no way proper Expressions in the Mouth of a Minister. I am not an Advocate for the Author of the *Synod*, for I profess I have no Knowledge of him; but I am concern'd for Mr. *Bradbury*, that he should have no greater Command of his Temper than to be guilty of those things which tend to the Reproach of the Function he belongs to. *Tantene Animis cœlestibus Ira?* Surely Pity would better have become you than Passion.

I heartily wish and pray, that in the carrying on this Debate a true Regard may be had to the Truths of Christianity, and that the Church of Christ may be not wounded thro' the Sides of those who are now unhappily stigmatiz'd as *Arians*. It is a grievous thing to offend a Child of God: And as I hope you will allow many of them to be so who differ'd from you on the Tenth of *March* last, be cautious how you or your Brethren express yourselves concerning them.

A L A S!

A L A S ! what is become of our Con-  
 scientious Liberty ? where is our tender  
 Regard to scrupulous Consciences, which  
 the Dissenters have been so long pleading  
 for ? it is a melancholy Entertainment for  
 a serious Mind to reflect on the cruel  
 Rents and Divisions which must be the  
 natural Results of Imposition, and where  
 this Matter will end God knows ; 'tis  
 dreadfully to be fear'd, not in his Glory.  
 I suppose I am *drawn in for't too*, and you  
 perhaps, may give your self the Trouble  
 to answer this ; if so, you may assuredly  
 expect to hear again from him who is

*Your Friend and Well-wisher,*

*The Dissenting Lay-man.*

F I N I S.





